

collection and the assessment of groundwater quality; and provide recommendations for the continuing improvement of groundwater data collection and assessment for the state's groundwater protection programs. One result of this effort is the *Texas Groundwater Data Dictionary* (TCEQ publication GI-272) which provides a standardized framework for the collection and storage of groundwater information.

The **Groundwater Research Subcommittee** works to identify interagency research needs and provides a coordinated approach for discussion of potential funding sources. This Subcommittee has been tasked with identifying projects where shared resources could support research to solve problems that are common to Committee members, using expertise from many different subject areas in a multi-disciplinary approach, identifying opportunities for cooperatively applying to federal agencies for pass-through monies, facilitating cooperation by identifying ways to join research forces with state or federal agencies and local governmental entities, helping universities develop stronger research proposals to address specifically identified problems, and facilitating communication between research organizations where research initiatives overlap.

The **Legislative Report Subcommittee** facilitates the full Committee's efforts in developing and publishing the Committee's biennial report to the Legislature (*Activities of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee*, TCEQ publication SFR-047) and is responsible for reviewing the draft report's contents, developing recommendations, and revising the scope of the report as needed. This Subcommittee is active 6 – 8 months before the Legislative session.

The **Nonpoint Source Task Force** facilitates implementation of the groundwater component of the Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) program in Texas and provides support and guidance for the groundwater NPS management policy of the state. The primary goal of this Task Force is to coordinate groundwater input to the *NPS Management Plan* (TCEQ publication SFR-068) and inform Committee participants of NPS funding cycles.

The **Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee** develops and implements educational outreach programs for landowners concerned with groundwater

protection and environmental health issues and facilitates interagency communication and coordination to provide support for landowner educational outreach projects. Activities include developing educational materials, coordination of outreach programs, and special projects. Special efforts are devoted to areas of the state where groundwater has high levels of naturally occurring constituents of concern such as nitrates, arsenic, and radionuclides, and state-wide education is provided for landowners on the proper closure of abandoned water wells and on-site wastewater treatment. Various Subcommittee publications are available through the Committee's Web site.

Meetings

The Committee and most Subcommittees meet quarterly; meeting times and agendas are posted on the Secretary of State's Web site (www.sos.state.tx.us) and on the Committee's Web site. The Committee also maintains a mailing list of its members, designated and alternate members, agency support staff, and interested parties for meeting notification. The Committee maintains written records of all Committee and Subcommittee meetings and makes them available on its Web site.

Further Information

For more information, or to obtain Committee publications, visit the Committee's Web site at www.tgpc.state.tx.us or contact us at:

Texas Groundwater Protection Committee c/o
Groundwater Planning and Assessment Team
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
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Many of the Committee's publications are also available through TCEQ's on-line Publications Catalog (www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/search_pubs.html).

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T E X A S GROUNDWATER PROTECTION C O M M I T T E E



MEMBER AGENCIES

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Texas Water Development Board
Railroad Commission of Texas
Department of State Health Services
Texas Department of Agriculture
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology
Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

T E X A S GROUNDWATER PROTECTION C O M M I T T E E

Created in 1989, the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee is bridging the gap between state groundwater programs. Composed of representatives from the state agencies listed on the cover, the Committee strives to identify areas where new or existing groundwater programs could be enhanced, as well as improve coordination among agencies involved in groundwater-related activities.

The Committee helps facilitate state agencies' implementation of the state's groundwater protection policy, adopted by the Texas Legislature in 1989. This policy establishes non-degradation of the state's groundwater as the goal for all state programs. It recognizes the variability of the state's aquifers, the importance of maintaining water quality for existing and potential uses, the protection of the environment, and the maintenance and enhancement of the state's long-term economic health.

The policy states that pollutant discharges, waste disposal, and other regulated activities be conducted in a manner that will maintain present uses and not impair potential uses of groundwater or pose a public health hazard. The policy recognizes the use of the best professional judgment by the responsible state agencies in attaining these goals.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) holds the Committee chairmanship and provides administrative support for the Committee.

Major Responsibilities

- Improve coordination between state and federal agencies in the area of groundwater protection.
- Study and recommend to the Legislature new protection programs and file with the Governor and the Legislature a report of the Committee's activities.
- Publish an annual *Joint Groundwater Monitoring and Contamination Report* (TCEQ publication SFR-056) describing the current status of groundwater monitoring programs of each member agency and groundwater contamination cases documented or under enforcement during the calendar year.
- Advise the TCEQ on development of management plans to prevent groundwater pollution from agricultural chemicals.
- Develop, implement, and update a comprehensive state groundwater protection strategy.

Groundwater Protection Strategy

The *Texas Groundwater Protection Strategy* (TCEQ publication AS-188) contains guidelines for the prevention of groundwater contamination and the conservation of groundwater, and it provides for the coordination of groundwater protection activities. The *Strategy* recognizes that the state has many successful groundwater programs implemented across local and state governmental agencies and research institutions. It documents how the current regulatory, outreach, and research programs work to protect groundwater and identifies gaps in groundwater protection program implementation or coordination. The *Strategy* addresses the following topics:

- Policy Framework for Groundwater Protection
- Characterizing the State's Groundwater Resources
- Roles and Responsibilities in Protecting Groundwater
- Program Implementation
- Groundwater Information and Data Management
- Research to Improve Groundwater Management
- Public Education
- Public Participation
- Strategy Development and Planning
- Recommendations for Action

Subcommittees

The Committee has chosen to implement certain aspects of the *Strategy* and to work on special issues through various Subcommittees and Task Forces composed of agency staff, stakeholders, and the general public. The various Subcommittees keep the Committee up-to-date on current issues and on the status of on-going projects. The Subcommittees report to the Committee at its regularly scheduled meetings.

The **Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee** coordinates the development and implementation of state management plans for the prevention of pesticide contamination. In 2001, TCEQ published the *Texas State Management Plan for Prevention of Pesticide Contamination of Groundwater* (TCEQ publication SFR-070/01) which describes the general policies and regulatory approaches the state will use to protect groundwater resources from risk of contamination by pesticides. This EPA-approved plan provides a generic framework for developing more comprehensive pesticide-specific plans if needed. This Subcommittee has five work groups:

- State Management Plan (SMP) Task Force — writes and revises Generic and Pesticide-Specific SMPs
- Education Task Force — develops educational information and materials and coordinates educational outreach
- Site Selection Task Force — develops groundwater sampling strategies and identifies monitoring areas
- Data Evaluation and Interpretation Task Force — evaluates and interprets data and coordinates the state's responses to contamination
- Best Management Practices (BMPs) Task Force — identifies BMPs that can be used to prevent or curtail pesticide contamination of groundwater

The **Data Management Subcommittee** has been tasked to further integrate groundwater data management across all Committee member agencies and organizations; design and facilitate a process for the coordination and integration of groundwater data